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# THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION.

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## AN ADDRESS,

BY THE

REV. J. A. SEISS, A. M.

DELIVERED IN THE HALL OF ALLEGANY COUNTY ACADEMY, AT THE  
ANNUAL EXAMINATION, ON THE EVENING OF JULY 15TH, 1851.

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CUMBERLAND:

C. W. WHITE, BALTIMORE STREET.

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1851.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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CUMBERLAND, *July 17th*, 1851.

*Dear Sir*:—I am directed by the Board of Trustees of the Allegany County Academy to thank you for your able and eloquent address, at the recent Examination of the pupils of the Academy, and to request of you a copy of the same for publication.

With great respect,

Your friend and servant,

WM. PRICE,

*President of the Board of Trustees.*

Rev. J. A. Seiss.

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CUMBERLAND, MD., *July 18th*, 1851.

*Dear Sir*:—Yours of yesterday, communicating to me officially the thanks of the Trustees of Allegany County Academy, for my recent address, delivered at their request, and in their behalf requesting a copy of the same for publication, is before me.

The address to which you allude, is so irregular in its composition, and so imperfectly digested, that I am almost afraid to lay it before the community in print. But as it was prepared with a view to benefit the public, and hoping that its circulation will not be entirely fruitless, I herewith transmit to you a copy of it to be disposed of as may be seen fit.

Grateful for the kindness thus bestowed upon me by the Academy, and for the polite manner in which you have made known to me the wishes of the Trustees, I am,

With great respect,

Your obedient friend,

J. A. SEISS.

To Wm. Price, Esq., President of the

Board of Trustees of Allegany Co. Academy.



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## THE ADDRESS.

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It may be taken for granted, that any effort which a man may make in a literary way, will always bear about it something of the air of the profession to which he belongs. The thoughts, and the modes of thought, with which he is in daily communion, will necessarily stamp their impress on every thing proceeding from his lips or pen. He may sometimes step aside to gather a few flowers, or to look upon some foreign scenery ; but it is never to be expected that he will wander very far from the path in which he has chosen to perform his pilgrimage through life.

By the officers of Allegany County Academy I have been solicited to address the people of Cumberland, and the friends of this institution. I am a sworn public instructor. My profession places me in the consecrated ranks of those whose great commission from the King of Glory is, “ *Go, ye, and teach all nations.*” The aim of those who have invited me to this desk—the whole object of this corporation—is, to furnish convenient and attractive facilities for mental improvement in this, our mountain city. My theme, therefore, is settled. It is fastened upon me by every propriety in the case. Some, who have not been at the pains to consider its undying interest, and vast importance, may think it trite. Many may regard it as homely and uninspiring at best. But I trust that I shall gain credit with those whose favor is most to be coveted, when I make *Education* the burden of my present remarks.

I am a minister of Christianity. I am speaking at the instance of a literary institution. And it is a remarkable fact, that religion and learning have always been very intimately associated. Even where religion assumed false and spurious forms, we can come

very near the measure of literary progress, from the depth and cultivation of the devotional sentiment. Wherever men have given themselves any real concern for the glory of what they considered worshipful and Divine, there learning has flourished to an extent far beyond less religious nations and times. In fact, the most learned men that have ever lived—the men who have contributed most to the fund of literature, and done most to enlarge the compass of human thought, have, in the main, been ministers and defenders of religion.

Egypt was the cradle of learning. In Egyptian history we read of the first colleges. There was Thebes, which was visited by the great Pythagoras. There was Memphis, where Thales and Democritus went for consultation. There was Heliopolis, where Plato studied. There was Sais, where Solon was first taught the principles of legislation. But Egypt was not less famous for religious devotion, than for learning. Time and decay have not yet obliterated all of her magnificent temples. Her "*wise men*" were her *priests*. And her deep reverence for her gods may still be read from the faded paintings and hieroglyphics of her wonderful ruins and tombs.

If we turn to the land of Socrates and Plato, of Homer, Demosthenes, Thucydides, and Heroditus, we shall not be more forcibly struck with her intellectual cultivation, than with her extreme religiousness. With respect to the very "*eye of Greece*," the proverb ran: "You can as easily find a *god* in Athens as a man." And the testimony of the inspired Paul to the Areopagus was, "*Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are very religious.*"—(Acts of the Apostles, xvii. 22.)

And as religion, even in its degenerated and heathenish forms, has always been closely associated with learning, and has always sympathised in its depressions and triumphs, the case is certainly not different where religion appears in its purity and true excellence. Religion cannot prosper without the aid of learning; and learning is but partial and dwarfed when it does not embrace

religion. They are twin-sisters. They have the same origin. They came into being at the same time. They exist for the same objects. They have for their common field, the sacred territory of the human soul. They are the oxygen and nitrogen of that atmosphere which supports and nourishes the immortal spirit. Separated from each other, both become offensive and poisonous. For we are told in the holy records, that men perish for *lack of knowledge*, as well as for want of religion. A man religious without education is a detestable bigot, or a mad enthusiast. A learned man without religion, is a fiend in flesh. But, he who is both religious and learned, is allied with heavenly orders, and is but "*a little lower*" than those bright intelligences who people the homestead of God.

True religion, and true education, are God's right hand and left. We call the one Divine, and the other is not human. They are the two reins, whose ends join, and which determine the connexion and correspondence between the Almighty Creator and His moral universe. The great Eternal is the Author of them both. For, as I once said in this selfsame spot, next after creation,<sup>2</sup> God's highest position is that of a *teacher*. His school-room is immensity. The broad night is the black-board on which his own fingers have written out, in letters of light, lessons for our learning. He has given his Spirit for the preparation and explanation of a common school-book for mankind, which shall not grow obsolete in the waste of generations, nor even be superseded by the revelations of eternity. And all the words of his mouth, and the strokes of his hand, are designed to teach man wisdom.

Education, then, is a Divine theme—a theme of universal interest—an eternal theme—which is not to be contemplated in the light of mere loss and gain, or to be set aside for the romance of savage wildness, or ignorant simplicity. It is a thing of God, sanctified by his own example, and by the labors of men "of whom the world was not worthy." And we are bound by every



duty we owe to our Maker, to ourselves, and to our country, to devote to it our attention and our prayers.

But what is education? What does it propose? What end is it to accomplish?—This is the centre of all the weight and significance of the subject. It is not merely to be taught to read, and write, and cipher to the extent of ordinary arithmetical rules. It is not simply to drag through a college routine; to learn to decline *hic, hæc, hoc*; and to secure a parchment with a few rude Latin sentences written on it in large letters. It is even more than the storing of the memory with rare and curious information on literary and scientific subjects. A man may read, and write, and manage the rules of three, and with great facility lay off triangles, and circles, and squares, and parallelograms; he may be able to recite Latin declensions, and Greek conjugations, and Euclid's propositions; he may have wormed his way through every great book of science, and trod every furrow in the field of literature; and yet, he may not be *educated* in any true sense of the word. The human soul is not a mere lumber-room, to be filled, like a museum, with things as useless as they are curious and rare. Man was not made to become a mere treasure-house of facts, and dates, and grammatical rules, and mathematical laws. He was never designed to become so much like a book, or a library, as only to be distinguished by vocal and locomotive powers. When God made the human mind, he selected heavenly material, and he has shaped it for a high sphere, and a high destiny.

Institutions of learning are good and wise things. The importance and value of colleges and academies, as auxiliaries in the great cause of education, is too obvious to be controverted. They have not produced all the thorough scholarship contained in the world; but they have the honor of having begotten much of it. But not all who pass through them, and bear away their honors, are necessarily well educated. Have we no Hottentots, with full-signed diplomas in their pockets, and talking largely upon matter, and space, and philosophy, and laws? Have we no literary



blockheads, or learned dolts? Do we never meet with graduated young gentlemen from these seats of learning, who might well take up the cry of the young Shunamite : “ *Oh my head! my head!*”

Man was made for *action*—original, self-directed, virtuous, effective action. He has been brought into being in order that he may *do something*, and do something *good*. We are all members together in one vast and complicated system of agencies, each one having his allotted place, and all designed as active *workers*. And education, in its true scope and meaning, and according to the derivation of the term, is the drawing out—the development—the putting into vigorous and unimpeded activity—of all the native powers of body, mind, and heart, so as to fit us for the accomplishment of the great object of our being. To promote the happiness and the excellence of the individual, to render him a valuable member of society, and to accustom him to aspire, by the proper discharge of all his social and religious duties, to the happiness which awaits the good in a future world, are the great ends which true education always has in view in all cases.

Milton was not only a sublime poet, and a profound statesman, but also a Christian philosopher. “The glory of English literature, and the champion and martyr of English liberty,” his name is embalmed in the reverence of the world, and his fame will grow through the endurance of ages. His remarks on the true objects of education deserve a place beside the noblest passages of the *Paradise Lost*. “*The end of learning*,” says the blind but knowing sage, “*is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which, being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection.*” (Letter to Hartlib, Prose Works, Philadelphia edition, vol. i. p. 150.)

To be properly educated, a man must be taught to think, to understand, to appropriate what he learns, and to act according to

his conscience and his judgment. It does not depend so much on the specific quantity of the materials of learning deposited in the memory. It does not rest with his facility in parsing, or his ready recollection of arbitrary technicalities. He may possess all this, and yet be a mere infant in all that respects the real dignity of man. “*And though,*” as the great Milton saith, “*he should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man, as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only.*” (Letter to Hartlib, &c.)

Give me the man whose cultivation of heart has kept pace with the development of his mind; who, though scantily informed about books, understands the things which give origin to books; who comprehends and feels his duty, and has the nerve and the daring to do it. His is the proper education. The outlines of angelic perfection are legible upon his soul. And the time will come, after his labors in this world are over, when he will take his place among those heavenly intelligences who minister in the eternal temple of wisdom and truth.

Education, in its widest extent, begins in the cradle. It comprehends every influence exerted upon the individual from infancy through life, and not only those systematic and studied efforts to impart instruction. The physician, as he lays down the rules for the management of the new-born child, is our first schoolmaster. The first lessons we learn as our infant being unfolds itself, we receive from a mother’s lips, or from some one occupying a mother’s place. Lord Brougham has somewhere expressed it as his belief, that the outlines of every man’s character are drawn during the first few years of life. Home, in that case, is the most important of all schools, and the whole character of the world is moulded by woman. It is in the retired home that the “young idea” first begins to shoot, and there that the stern oaken character of manhood and age receives its first bent. And whatever may

be said about the excellence of schools, and the efficiency of teachers, there is no school like *home*, and no teacher like a faithful *mother*. The fountain head of nearly all that is great and good in life, may be found in the nursery. 'Tis there, in tones which gently mix in with the most delicate sensibilities, that morality and religion are first planted in the soul. 'Tis there, under the sun and cloud of an approving or displeased countenance, that we catch the most powerful inspirations for what is noble and good, from one whose holy influences remain when she is gone. And I would not give the advantages of a properly regulated home for all other school privileges in the world !

But although I express myself thus strongly, I would not have it thought that other schools are to be despised. I am sure that not one of them is as highly esteemed as it should be. Organized institutions of learning are but one remove from the home ; and what is most to be desired, they often very nearly resemble it. It is their province to take a little more remote part in that great home-work of furnishing good and useful members to society. They cannot be dispensed with.

The Common School—the *commonest* school has its claims, and does a noble work. It lays the foundation for all after learning, and furnishes the initiatory degrees towards whatever is higher in literature, art, and science. The Sabbath School, and the catechetical Lectures, lie next in the path. The value of their services is past finding out. Eternity only shall disclose their full influences for good. At length the Academy, or the College becomes our *alma mater*. Here the higher paths of learning are laid open, and facilities are furnished to enable us to do battle with error, and to climb the sublime altitudes of wisdom. The whole course is admirably defined; every part is important; and the combined result of the whole is, to put us in our right places in this world of toil and anxiety, and to prepare us the better to hew our way through the conflicts of life. Thus our gifts are called out—our capacities are developed—and we enter upon

careers of usefulness, purity, and renown, admirable to the angels, and calling upon us the blessings of the Deity himself.

But, with all these excellent appliances for the promotion of education, after all, the matter depends mainly upon ourselves—our own studiousness and fidelity. Our parents may be prudent and faithful. The schools we attend may be good. Our teachers may be the most competent in the world. But, unless we put forth the necessary exertions to improve ourselves, we shall be but little benefited. High schools, and low schools, and *no* schools, are all about the same to the inattentive and the indolent. Wisdom cannot be imparted as with pitcher and funnel. There is no magic charm in a professor's voice to fill us with great and true thoughts without diligence and patient thinking on our part. The most magnificent college edifices are no more to us than old barns for all purposes of education, if we are dilatory and heedless.

Learning by *study* must be won;

'Twas ne'er entail'd from sire to son.

We sometimes hear it said, that such or such a man, distinguished among his fellows, is "*self-made*." And there is sometimes a falsehood involved in the remark. It intimates that those who have had the privileges of good schools are not self-made. But this is an evident misrepresentation of the truth. It is true, that some men rise to distinction with many less advantages than those enjoyed by others. History abounds with instances, in which men have risen up amid the greatest difficulties and embarrassments to the highest niches of fame. But no matter what are the advantages or disadvantages, every man is *self-made*, whether high or low, learned or unlearned. Look at the ignorant, brawling vagabond on your streets, with his head as empty as his character is despicable. Who made him what he is? Something may be owing to the force of circumstances, but, in a general way, has he not made himself? Is not his present degradation the fruit of his own wilful negligence of what would have led him to a better destiny? Could he not, this very hour, greatly better himself, if



he did but set about it? If he remains a noisy ignoramus, and a vile nuisance to society, is it not because he chooses to be? Certainly, he makes himself. Look again at the men in your community of Ahithophel acuteness — the men whom you esteem most learned, wise, and discreet. Whether they have been graduated in colleges or not; whether they have had opportunities of what is called a “liberal education” or not; are they not self-made? What causes them to differ from the masses of their fellow men around them? They have had the same world to deal with, and nature brought them into the world with equal endowments. What causes the disparity now? The answer is obvious. Those men of learning and renown have been vigorous students. Many whom they have left far in the back ground have had equal, and some of them, greater opportunities, but they were not improved with the same diligence. While the one class were wasting their time in sensual dissipation, or in scanning the obscenities and empty volumes of the novelists, the others were communing with the illustrious dead, and trying their strength in hard mental labor. When the latter read, they read for information not for amusement. Their eyes were not on immediate gratification, but on future usefulness. Seeing, they saw and perceived; hearing, they heard and understood; and they never omitted to turn to edification whatever met them in the broad world. They have made themselves.

Wisdom is like game in the forest. It is there, but to obtain it we must undergo much effort, and wait and watch with untiring patience. It is like gold under the rocks, and only the most intense application can bring it out. It is he only, who digs and digs with unbated zeal and endurance, that shall secure the treasure. Colleges, or no colleges, every man must make himself.

No good of worth sublime will Heaven permit  
 To light on man, as from the passing air;  
 The lamp of genius, though by nature lit,  
 If not protected, prun'd, and fed with care,  
 Soon dies, or runs to waste with fitful glare;  
 And learning is a plant that spreads and towers,  
 Slow as Columbia's aloë.

I have said, that education is closely identified with religion. I have said, that its great object is, to fit man for his whole destiny. In proportion, then, as it fulfils its purpose, or assumes its proper office, it is entitled to the respect, the confidence, and the support of a moral or religious enterprize. I believe that our systems of education too much overlook the moral province of this work. We view education too much as an *end* in itself; whereas, it is only *a means* to an end. It is viewed too much as a genteel and honorable accomplishment, which ministers more to pride and fashion than to virtue. Education is merely an instrument of power, the use of which is, to help man to a knowledge of his Maker, and of his duty. It is a mistake, therefore, to have our schools so exclusively occupied in teaching the laws of language, and numbers, and physics, whilst the character and destiny of our own high nature enter, at best, but slightly into the round of prescribed studies. Little is ordinarily said of duty, beyond the duty of being prepared to recite the lessons assigned, and that not always the most agreeably enforced. And with all the lectures about nature and her works, the soul is seldom led up to the proper contemplation of Nature's God. We must understand language, for it is the only great vehicle of thought. We should understand mathematics and natural science. But these are the mere scaffolding to the glorious edifice which education would rear. We need intellectual training, and mental discipline, but only with a view to some worthy purposes; and our hearts—our natural impulses—our affections and feelings—our *moral powers*—are not to be neglected. It is well for us to understand earths, and liquids, and modes of taking measurements; but it is better for us to understand ourselves, our capacities, our dangers, our wants, and the true methods of securing to ourselves the happiest destiny. All this is plain common sense, and it is singular that many are so slow to perceive it.

But with all these imperfections, there is, nevertheless, something of a moral effect in education. Madame De Stael has

observed, that “the connexion between all the faculties of man is such, that even by improving his literary taste, you contribute to raise and dignify his character.”—*The Influence of Literature upon Society, translated from the French of Madame De Staël, Holstein, &c.*) Some differ with this position; but it is unquestionably true. Who are at the head of all great and good enterprizes which are now pouring their blessings on the world? Who enter into them with most vigor and spirit? Who sustain them with greatest sacrifices of toil, time, and expense? Men from the jungles of India? Esquimaux? Africans? South Sea Islanders? The ignorant and uneducated among us? I trow not. On the other hand, who are the ringleaders of mobs and riots? Who tenant our jails and penitentiaries? “Look at the popular insurrections and massacres in France. Of what description of persons were those ruffians composed, who, breaking forth like a torrent, overwhehned the bounds of lawful authority? who were the cannibals that sported with the mangled carcasses and palpitating limbs of their murdered victims, and dragged them about with their teeth in the gardens of the Tuilleries? Were they refined and elaborated into these barbarities by the efforts of a too polished education? No: they were the very scum of the people, destitute of culture, whose atrocity was only equalled by their ignorance.” (*Robert Hall’s works, vol. 1. p. 120.*) And no matter where we turn, every where we find ignorance attended with vice and misery in all their most horrid forms.

I do not say, that every educated man, as education is ordinarily reckoned, is necessarily a good man. I do not say, that education of itself is sufficient to convert and renew the depraved heart. But I do say, that it predisposes its possessor to purity and holiness; and that it does more for the refinement and moral elevation of men, than any thing short of Divine grace. If its legitimate tendencies are unobstructed, its necessary and infallible effect is to make men better. And with one of the most eloquent of England’s clergy, “I am persuaded, that the extreme profli-



gacy, improvidence, and misery which are so prevalent among the laboring classes in many countries, are chiefly to be ascribed to the want of education.” (*Robert Hall’s works.*)

It is a fact that cannot be successfully controverted, that there is something of moral character in education—that the great ends to be accomplished by education, have some virtue or moral excellency as their necessary foundation. Why do we seek after education? What do we propose to ourselves in endeavoring to obtain it? Some one will answer: to become eloquent—to be able to sway men’s hearts. But true eloquence belongs to the domain of ethics. It is a virtue—a branch of morality—and cannot exist in honorable perfection separate from some moral quality of the heart. It was a favorite maxim even with the heathen:

Non posse oratorem esse nisi virum bonum.

None but a good man can be an orator. Art, learning, and science may assist eloquence, but they cannot create it. True oratory is inseparable from virtue. And whatever form it may assume, it is nothing more nor less than the breaking forth of an internal moral impulse or affection.\* And if education will make men eloquent, it will, so far at least, make men better.

Others are striving to become educated in order to become more useful—to understand the duties of life—and to know how best to perform them. But usefulness is one of the greatest elements of moral excellence. The man who conscientiously studies the means of usefulness in order to be useful, is a virtuous man. He is not far from the kingdom of heaven. So that, if education promotes the usefulness of men, it at the same time improves their moral character.

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\* Wiley, of New York, has recently published an interesting book, entitled *Eloquence a Virtue; or Outlines of a Systematic Rhetoric; Translated from the German of Dr. Francis Theremin*. It is a book which forcibly sets forth the moral foundation of all genuine eloquence.

But it will be said, that many seek after education merely out of selfish ambition. It is said, they merely wish to rise above their fellows, and to secure reputation and fame. But this does not affect my position. If such presumptuous aspirations were the product of education, then indeed, they might be cited to its prejudice. But where they do exist, they exist prior to education, and are the children of ignorance and vanity. The modesty of true science and learning is proverbial. Whilst the rude, uninstructed peasant, or ignorant pretender, believes that he understands everything before him; the experienced philosopher knows that he understands nothing. Whilst the sophists of Athens were asserting their pretensions to universal knowledge, Socrates daily affirmed that the only thing he knew to a certainty was his own ignorance. And Newton, after having penetrated immensity, and read the laws which govern the whole material universe, sat down and beautifully said: "I know not what I may appear to the world; but to myself, I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself with now and then finding a smother pebble, or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." Pride and self-conceit are not the products of true education.

There is, moreover, an ambition that is noble and praiseworthy. There is a thirst for self-improvement and excellence which is virtuous and good.

Nature, that framed us of four elements,  
 Warring within our breasts for regimen,  
 Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:  
 Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend  
 The wondrous architecture of the world,  
 And measure every wandering planet's course,  
 Still climbing after knowledge infinite,  
 And always moving as the restless spheres,

Wills us to wear ourselves, and never rest  
 Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,  
 That perfect bliss and sole felicity,  
 The sweet fruition of a heavenly crown.

(*Marlow's Tamerlane the Great.*)

And if education tends to foster an ambition like this, and to feed a generous enthusiasm for virtuous fame, it is certainly one of the best conservators of goodness.

The ultimate object of education, then, is *ethical*, if not religious. Its aim is to make men think aright, and to apply themselves to the true purposes of their being. It is to retrench our native depravity, develop our better nature, put conscience and reason on the throne, and abridge the afflictions of the family of man. And the precious blessings and honors of wisdom descend only on him who seeks it with this view.

Citizens of Cumberland ! I have but a few words more, and I have done. I am not a foreigner to you. I am one among yourselves. Born and nurtured in your state, and having chosen your mountain city as my home, my interests and feelings are closely identified with yours. My heart is not a passive stranger to what makes for the honor or reproach of this community. And it is not less my inclination than my duty as a citizen, to do what I can to render us worthy of a good name. I believe that we have intellect here which would do honor to any city on earth. I believe we have instances of ripe scholarship here which is not surpassed in Maryland. I believe we have all the elements here to build up for ourselves a reputation that would shine through the roll of ages. But everything is not as it should be. There is too little zeal for education and mental improvement. There is entirely too much inclination to the sensual, and the vulgar. There is too wide a disproportion between the consideration bestowed upon the appetite and the purse, and that bestowed upon the improvement of the mind and heart. Books are too scarce.

Libraries are in too little demand. Reading is too much neglected. Eating and gaming houses, and vulgar amusements, are vastly too much frequented. Children are not kept as regularly and as long at school as they should be. And unless there is a speedy waking up to greater concern for the good of the mind and the heart, Cumberland, with all her vast resources, will soon find herself in the rear of the age. I do not complain of a lack of industry, or energy, or enterprise. There is spirit enough, if it were only more prudently directed; and what we need most is, that it should take a more intellectual turn, and look more to the welfare of the soul.

It is not out of acerbity that I make these remarks. The truthfulness of what I say, makes me ashamed and sorrowful. I thus express myself to you, because I have our common good, and common honor at heart. I point to these sore spots that healing remedies may be applied. I wish to see a better state of things. There are other men among us who have similar desires. Shall we not be heard? Shall we not be heeded? My fellow citizens, as one whose dwelling is among your dwellings—as one whose honor is measurably united with your honor—as one whose sworn duty it is to point the public mind to the paths of virtuous elevation—I most sincerely and earnestly ask of you to give more attention to the great cause of education. Supply yourselves more plentifully with useful books and reading facilities. Do more reading, more thinking, than has been your habit. Instruct your children, and have them instructed, and see that they are brought up with studious habits. You will thus give them a fortune richer than lands or gold, and which cannot be wrested from them. Throw your influence, and the force of your example, into all prudent schemes to disseminate intelligence and improve the soul. And above all, think of the wants and dangers that surround your country and your posterity. Think of the necessity of wisdom and virtue to secure safety amid these perilous times. For if the period shall ever come, when the glorious fabric of our indepen-

dence shall totter—when the beacon of joy that now rises as a pillar of fire, a sign and wonder to the world, shall grow dim—the cause will be found in the ignorance of the people. If our blest Union, consecrated as it is with the blood and ashes of our fathers, is to continue to cheer the hopes and animate the oppressed of every nation; if our fair fields are to remain untrod by the hirelings of despotism; if long days of blessedness are to attend our country in her career of glory so brilliantly begun; if the sun is to shine on unclouded upon the homes of freemen; then, before all things, we must see to the mental and moral training of our children. 'Tis this that startles the tyrant in his dreams of power, and palsies the force of despotic sway. 'Tis this that rouses the slumbering energies of the oppressed, and gives tokens of hope to the bond and to the free. Intelligence and virtue laid the corner-stone, and reared the majestic columns of our national edifice; and nothing but intelligence and virtue—a love for truth and an expansive benevolence—will preserve it from crumbling again to ashes. And if it must be, that our present happy freedom is to come to the grave, let this epitaph be chiseled on the stone that marks the ruin :

PERISHED THROUGH OUR IGNORANCE AND VICE.